



United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency

# Agreements Will Boost Kalamazoo River Cleanup

**Allied Paper/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Superfund Site**  
Kalamazoo, Michigan February 2007

## Open house and public meeting

EPA has scheduled an open house followed by a formal public meeting on **March 15** (see locations on back page), so you can learn more about the latest developments in the Kalamazoo River cleanup. At the **open house**, which runs from **1 – 3:30 p.m.** at the **Plainwell Community Schools Administration Building**, EPA and other officials will be available to meet one-on-one with the public to discuss the site activities. At the **public meeting** from **6:30 – 8:30 p.m.** at the **Plainwell High School Cafeteria**, officials will make a formal presentation about the new agreements and details on the cleanup plans.

If you need special accommodations to attend the open house or public meeting, contact EPA Community Involvement Coordinator Don de Blasio at the contact numbers listed below.

## Contact EPA

For more information or if you have comments about the Kalamazoo River cleanup, you may contact these EPA representatives:

### Don de Blasio

Community Involvement  
Coordinator  
(312) 886-4360 or (800) 621-8431,  
weekdays 10 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.  
deblasio.don@epa.gov

### Shari Kolak

Remedial Project Manager  
(312) 886-6151 or (800) 621-8431,  
weekdays 10 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.  
kolak.shari@epa.gov

### Samuel Borries

On-Scene Coordinator  
(312) 353-8360 or (800) 621-8431,  
weekdays 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.  
borries.samuel@epa.gov

Cleanup work will begin soon on the Kalamazoo River, now that two important legal agreements have been signed.

Under the two agreements, known as “administrative orders on consent,” Millennium Holdings LLC and Georgia-Pacific Corp. will perform a cleanup in the Plainwell Impoundment Area, a portion of the Kalamazoo River Superfund site. The two companies will also conduct additional sampling of the river.

The agreements, signed on February 21, 2007, are legally enforceable in court. They are the result of a little over two years of mediated negotiations between the two companies and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and the Natural Resource Trustees, which include the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, MDEQ, Michigan Department of Attorney General, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

## Background

Since November 2004, EPA has been involved in confidential discussions to resolve differences between the mediating parties that were delaying the cleanup and restoration of the Kalamazoo River site. From the beginning, one of the goals of the negotiations was to reach agreement on how best to use the existing data to move forward with cleanup. The parties also needed to determine whether additional investigations were needed before EPA could develop cleanup options for the first reach of the river. One result of the mediation was an agreement for the potentially responsible parties (PRPs) to perform a removal action in the Plainwell Impoundment. Another result was an agreement between EPA and the PRPs to conduct additional sampling throughout the site.

## Removal action at Plainwell Impoundment

The PRPs agreed to perform a “time critical removal action” (an accelerated cleanup method used when quick action is needed to clean up hazardous materials) at the Plainwell Impoundment. The Plainwell Impoundment stretches from the Plainwell Dam upstream past U.S. 131 and includes polluted river sediment and banks and floodplain areas.

EPA and MDEQ have approved the engineering design document for the removal action, which is attached to the cleanup agreement and available for review in the site information repositories (see locations on Page 2). The cleanup will include removal of about 132,000 cubic yards of waste material, containing 4,400 pounds of PCBs, from the impoundment area. The estimated cost of the cleanup is \$21 million. If you would like more details on this activity, please see the box on Page 3. This cleanup action will begin this spring.

## **What are PCBs?**

PCBs are a group of 209 chemicals that were produced in the United States between 1929 and 1978 for use primarily as industrial coolants, insulators, and lubricants. PCBs were used in hundreds of industrial and commercial applications including electrical, heat transfer, and hydraulic equipment; as plasticizers in paints, plastics, and rubber products; in pigments, dyes, and carbonless copy paper, and many other applications because they were stable and resisted wear and chemical breakdown.

The same chemical properties that made PCBs useful to industry are now responsible for persistent levels of PCBs remaining in the environment, including the Kalamazoo River. PCBs persist in the environment because they adhere readily to organic material in sediment and soil, and tend to build up in the fatty tissue of fish and other animals. PCBs have been demonstrated to cause a variety of adverse health effects in animals. PCBs cause cancer and non-cancer health effects on the immune, reproductive, nervous, and endocrine systems. Studies suggest PCBs have similar effects on humans.

The different health effects of PCBs may be interrelated, as alterations in one system may have significant implications for the other systems of the body. The potential adverse environmental and health effects of PCBs were not well understood until 1977, when the government banned most uses of PCBs.

## **Additional study of Kalamazoo River**

This agreement requires the PRPs to conduct additional sampling throughout the Kalamazoo River in what is called a supplemental remedial investigation and feasibility study agreement. The additional sampling will build upon data that has already been collected. The data produced from the additional sampling will be summarized in supplemental remedial investigation and feasibility study reports and will help EPA determine what, if any, additional cleanup needs to occur at the site. The agreement allows the sampling to be phased, so that sampling will begin at the most upstream reach of the river at Morrow Dam and will continue in the downstream sections once sampling is complete in a previous reach. The estimated cost of the additional SRI/FS work is \$15 million.

The agreement requires the PRPs to start collecting additional samples at specific locations in a 20-mile

upstream stretch of river between Morrow Dam and the Plainwell Dam including a three-mile stretch of Portage Creek. A work plan for the upstream sampling was drafted as part of the negotiations and has been approved by EPA. The work plan contains a detailed description of the sampling including how and where the samples will be collected. The work plan is attached to the Supplemental Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study agreement, and is available for review in the site information repositories. Sampling of the upstream reach of the river will begin this spring.

## **Information libraries**

The public can read documents related to the Kalamazoo River Superfund site at these places:

### **Kalamazoo Public Library**

315 S. Rose St.  
Kalamazoo

### **Charles Ransom Library**

80 S. Sherwood Ave.  
Plainwell

### **Allegan Public Library**

331 Hubbard St.  
Allegan

### **Otsego District Library**

219 S. Farmer St.  
Otsego

### **Saugatuck-Douglas Library**

10 Mixer St.  
Douglas

### **Waldo Library**

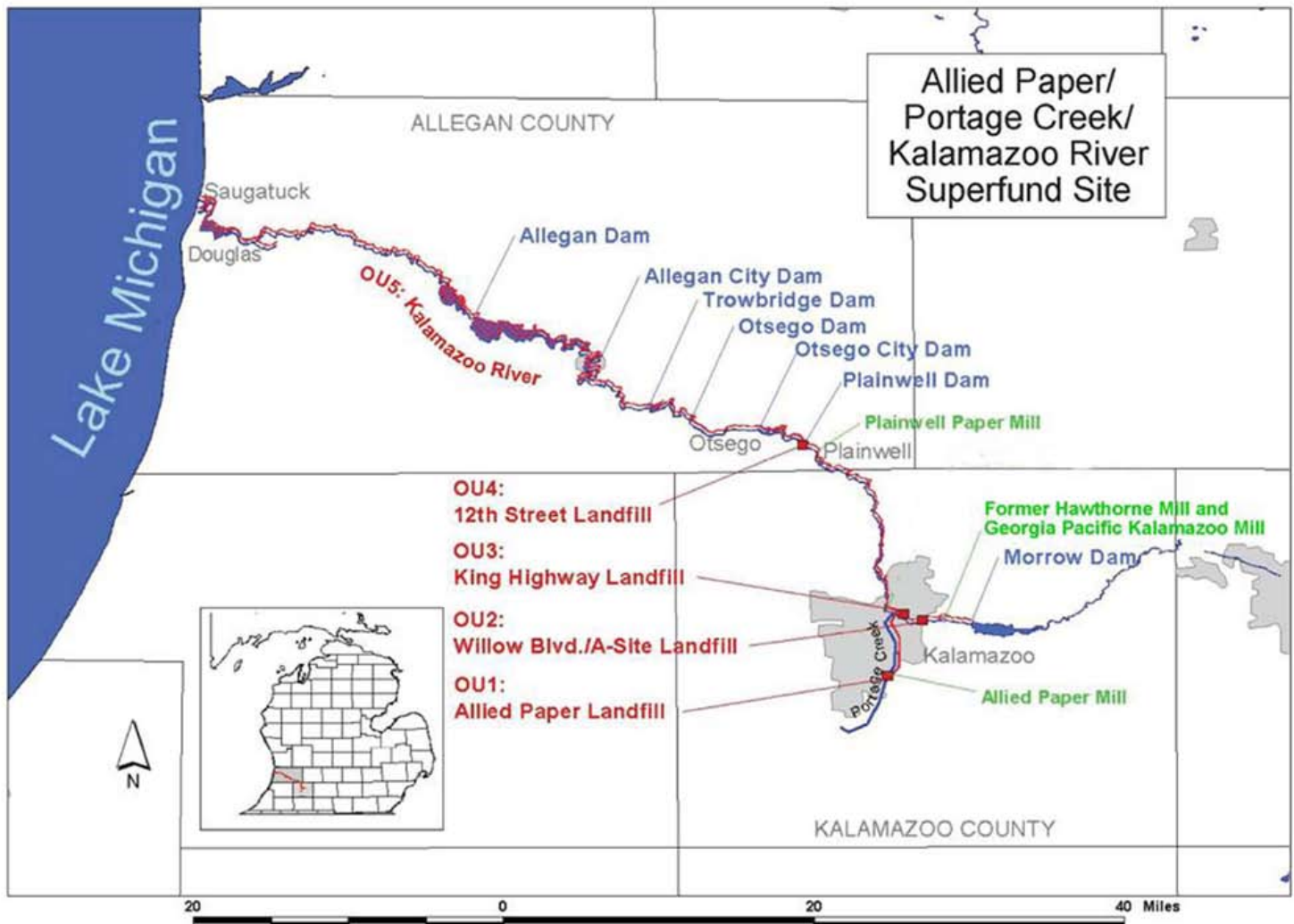
Western Michigan University  
1903 W. Michigan Ave.  
Kalamazoo

### **On the Web:**

[epa.gov/region5/sites/kalproject/](http://epa.gov/region5/sites/kalproject/)

## Details of the Plainwell Impoundment cleanup:

- Remove a portion of the Plainwell Dam in order to perform as much as possible dredging of PCB-contaminated sediment “in the dry”
- Dewater portions of the removal area to the extent feasible using coffer dams and a water control structure
- Remove in-stream sediment within 40 feet of existing riverbanks to a cleanup standard of either 1 part per million PCB or, to preserve the streambed, to within six inches of the channel bottom as it existed before the Plainwell Dam was constructed (“parts per million” is abbreviated ppm and is a tiny amount similar to a drop of food dye in 16 gallons of water)
- Implement re-suspension control measures to prevent migration of PCB-contaminated sediment
- Remove flood plain soil where PCBs are present above 50 ppm to achieve a cleanup goal of 5 ppm
- Create a 30-150 foot wide clean buffer along the river
- Create stable riverbanks
- Remove three mid-channel areas that have PCB concentrations greater than 50 ppm
- Remove soil with PCB concentrations greater than 4 ppm from an area of the flood plain near residential properties upstream of U.S. 131
- Dispose of the removed PCB-contaminated sediment and soil at the Allied Paper Landfill
- Create a stable, natural channel and re-vegetate with native plants



Complex Superfund cleanup sites are divided into smaller parts called “operable units.” The Kalamazoo River site has several OUs.

# ALLIED PAPER/PORTAGE CREEK/KALAMAZOO RIVER SUPERFUND SITE: Agreements Will Boost Kalamazoo River Cleanup

Region 5  
Office of Public Affairs (P-19J)  
77 W. Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60604

United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency



FIRST CLASS

## Upcoming Open House and Public Meeting about Kalamazoo River Superfund Site

**Open House**  
(no formal presentation)  
1 - 3:30 p.m.

Plainwell Community Schools  
Administration Building Conference Room  
600 School Drive  
Plainwell

**March 15, 2007**

**Public Meeting**  
(with formal presentation)  
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Plainwell High School Cafeteria  
684 Starr Rd. (also known as 102nd St.)  
Plainwell

EPA will share information about two agreements reached as a result of mediation at both the open house and the meeting. EPA and other officials will be available to answer questions and discuss the Plainwell Impoundment Area and Kalamazoo River site at both the 1 p.m. open house and the 6:30 p.m. meeting. There will also be a formal presentation at the meeting, but not at the open house.

If you need special accommodations, contact Don de Blasio (contact information on Page 1) by March 12.

If you have scientific and technical questions about the PCB cleanup of the Plainwell Impoundment Area and Kalamazoo River, you may contact EPA Remedial Project Manager Shari Kolak (contact information on Page 1).

When possible, site information is also posted on the Internet at [epa.gov/region5/sites/kalproject](http://epa.gov/region5/sites/kalproject)